



# Tom Lantos

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER**

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## **Secretary of State Powell Reaffirms Lantos Role On the Road Toward Normalizing U.S. Relations With Libya**

Secretary of State Colin Powell today recognized Tom Lantos, the ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, for his role in helping the United States and Libya begin to establish normal relations, particularly in light of Lantos' three-day visit to Tripoli in late January.

"I thank you and congratulate you on the historic moment that took place when you landed in Tripoli, the first member of Congress to do so in decades, and I thank you for the message you conveyed to Colonel Qhadafi," Powell told Lantos at a hearing by the House International Relations Committee. He also thanked Lantos for sharing his views directly with State Department officials immediately on the heels of his Libyan trip as arranged, and afterward sharing further observations with the media.

Lantos, in turn, expressed his appreciation for the extensive support and guidance that the State Department had provided for the three-day visit, for which the Committee had been laying the groundwork since September 2003. The bipartisan trip became all the more timely with the announcement on December 19 that Libya would dismantle its weapons of mass destruction, opening an opportunity for real, renewed diplomacy.

"I am pleased to report that we are seeing in Libya something that was previously unthinkable – a country with weapons of mass destruction has made the affirmative decision peacefully to give up its weapons of mass destruction programs," Lantos said. "Based on my meetings in Tripoli, it is clear that Colonel Qadhafi made this historic decision because he and his advisors realized that Libya could no longer afford to be a pariah nation."

But Lantos added, "given Libya's outrageous record over the past three decades, including the tragic Pan Am 103 bombing, we must tread very carefully. We must be skeptical of Libya's actions at every turn, and we must be relentless in verifying their destruction of WMD programs. American actions to normalize relations must be matched every step of the way by verifiable Libyan actions."

Powell confirmed that Libyan officials have been cooperating with the United States on revealing and dismantling the country's WMD capabilities since December 19. "They have been forthcoming," he said. "And I hope it continues to unfold as we have seen it unfold in the last several weeks."

Lantos pointed out that American policy over many years was a critical factor in Libya's dramatic about-face. "The economic, political, and diplomatic sanctions imposed against Tripoli were the result of bipartisan agreement involving the last three Presidents," he said. "And it involved cooperation with the British government and many of our other allies. This clearly indicates that firm and consistent international cooperation against rogue nations can produce significant positive results."

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